

The report contains \$150,000 for the Historic Wilson Theater Restoration Project in Rupert, Idaho. The Wilson Theater was built in 1920 and is on the National Register of Historic Places. The Theater is also part of Rupert's Historic Business District. Rupert is a predominantly rural community that recently experienced the closure of its largest employer, Kraft Cheese. The restoration of this theater is one aspect of the community's effort to revitalize itself, attract new employers and generate interest in the community. The community thus far has raised over \$1 million in private donations to restore the building, and federal funds will be only a small part of overall expenses. This project was requested by the non-profit Renaissance Art Center, Inc. in Rupert, Idaho.

The report contains \$50,000 for the Custer County Economic Development Initiative in Custer County, Idaho. The vast size of Custer County presents enormous financial challenges for a county that is overwhelmingly owned by the federal government. Custer County has a very small tax base with very large costs for maintaining roads and service over a very large area. This funding will permit the county to purchase and renovate an old middle school in Challis that would become a government and business center housing the offices of the City, County, and Economic Development offices and making them ADA compliant. Additionally, funding would help to provide for improvements to a multi-government complex in the City of Stanley and the rodeo grounds in the City of Mackay. This project would relieve an enormous strain on the limited yearly budget of Custer County and allow it to more efficiently deliver services to residents and visitors alike. This project was requested by Custer County, Idaho.

I appreciate the opportunity to provide a list of Congressionally directed projects in my region and an explanation of my support for them: 1.) \$150,000 for Historic Wilson Theater Restoration Project; Rupert, Idaho; 2.) \$50,000 for Custer County Economic Development Initiative; Custer County, Idaho; 3.) \$900,000 for City of Rocks Back Country Byway, Idaho; 4.) \$500,000 for Idaho Transit Coalition buses and bus facilities; and 5.) \$300,000 for I-84, Curtis Road to Broadway IC Widening, Boise, Idaho.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the FY08 Labor/HHS & Education Appropriations bill. I want to commend the Chairman and the staff for an excellent bill which signals a new direction and reflects our priorities as a Nation.

The goal of this bill has always been to make a strong investment in our future—to take seriously our responsibility to the American public, on the issues that affect people every day from our health to our children's education to the scientific research that will find the cures of tomorrow, from protecting workers to providing the training they need to make it in today's economy. I must say that this time around, our bill does not disappoint.

To help States serve 6.8 million unemployed and 13 million jobseekers, the bill provides a \$227.4 million or 1.9 percent increase over fiscal year 2007 for employment, training, and worker protection programs. On worker protection, the bill provides a \$45.5 million increase to key programs to improving safety and health for 113 million workers.

On education, the bill provides historic increases in No Child Left Behind, 8.4 percent

above 2007, including \$1.9 billion more for Title I grants to schools. For students with disabilities, the President's budget proposed to cut IDEA Part B grants by \$291 million or 2.7 percent below the fiscal year 2007 level. In contrast, this bill provides a \$299 million or a 2.8 percent increase over last year. More importantly, this bill reverses a 2-year decline in the federal contribution toward the rising costs of special education for 6.9 million children with disabilities.

It also makes real progress toward college affordability with a significant increase in Pell Grants, allowing us to raise the maximum Pell Grant by \$390 to \$4,700 and benefiting over 5.5 million students without reducing or eliminating other student financial assistance programs.

In the area of medical research, the bill provides continued investment at the NIH and CDC for innovative programs that save lives. With a \$750 million increase over last year, NIH will be able to support another 545 new and competing research grants over last year's level and 1,262 over the President's request.

The bill also provides much-needed investments in programs that support low income people: An increase of \$500.8 million or 23.2 percent above last year for LIHEAP to secure energy assistance for approximately 1 million more low-income seniors and families than last year. \$660.4 million for the Community Services Block Grant allowing states to expand critical services, such as housing, home weatherization, parenting education, adult literacy classes, and emergency food assistance. And a down payment of \$75 million or 3.6 percent in child care assistance, the first increase in discretionary spending for this program in more than five years.

Mr. Chairman, this bill reflects a real commitment to our longstanding responsibilities and true fiscal responsibility. Each of us should support the FY08 Labor/HHS & Education bill—a bill each of us can take home and proudly share with our constituents.

We will accomplish a lot of good with this bill, but I especially want to highlight and commend Chairman OBEY, for the "Reducing the Need for Abortion Initiative" included in the bill, which parallels legislation spearheaded by Representative RYAN and myself.

With close to \$650 million in increased funding over last year and approximately \$1.4 billion for programs such as Title X, Healthy Start, teen pregnancy prevention, adoption awareness, after school programs, and child care programs for new parents attending college, just to name a few, we are promoting policies so critical to reducing the need for abortion in this country.

This bold initiative represents a considerable investment in preventing unintended pregnancies and supporting new parents. It is strong on prevention, strong on family income supports, and it makes clear that we are serious about addressing the issue of abortion head on. That, for all of us, it is a matter of conscience.

Again, Mr. Chairman, I am proud to be a Member of this subcommittee, its Members, and the work we have done this year. With this bill, we make opportunity real for millions of Americans and we give people the tools they need to grow and thrive tomorrow.

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Chairman, I rise to support the bill and, in particular, its provisions to

help families obtain affordable housing with Section 8 vouchers and to help people with HIV/AIDS to secure housing with the assistance of the HOPWA program.

I want to thank the chairman for including \$300 million in this bill for Housing Opportunities for People With AIDS, the highest funding level ever for this program; and for providing \$403 million more than current funding for the Section 8 Tenant-Based Rental Assistance program. For years, we have had to fight for every nickel of funding and offer amendments for modest increases. It is a true pleasure to be working with a Chairman who better understands the needs of the American people and who is able to dedicate resources to areas of great need.

Rising housing costs and stagnating incomes have created serious housing affordability problems for growing numbers of low-income families. Years of Republican budget cuts have seriously damaged our public housing stock and forced thousands of people onto waiting lists for assistance. The list in NY grew so long that they stopped accepting applications. They have only recently announced their intention to reopen it, and they have been inundated by qualified people seeking help. To reduce the number of low-income families with severe housing affordability problems, it is critical that Congress increase Section 8 funding and resume funding for incremental vouchers, which I am pleased this bill does. The section 8 housing voucher program provides safe affordable housing to approximately 2 million American families in urban and rural communities in every State across our country. These vouchers are often the only resource for low-income families confronted by our Nation's affordable housing crisis.

In the past, my colleague Representative VELÁZQUEZ and I, often with the support of Chairman FRANK, have offered amendments that have passed with bipartisan support to increase the Section 8 program. We were successful in passing amendments in 2003, 2005, and 2006 to increase funding so that more families would be able to obtain affordable housing. While we can always do more and clearly there are still many unmet needs, I am pleased by the increases in today's bill.

[See Roll Call 267, 109th Congress 2nd Session (243–178), Roll Call 339, 109th Congress 1st Session (225–194), Roll Call 453, 108th Congress 1st Session (217–208)].

HOPWA is the only Federal housing program that specifically provides cities and states with the resources to address the housing crisis facing people living with HIV/AIDS. Americans living with HIV/AIDS are often forced to choose between expensive drug treatments and necessities such as housing. According to the National AIDS Housing Network, rates of new HIV diagnoses among the homeless are 16 times the rate in the general population, and HIV/AIDS death rates are five to seven times higher. People with AIDS who are homeless are more likely to be uninsured, use an emergency room, and be admitted to a hospital.

Inadequate housing is not only a barrier to treatment, but also puts people with HIV/AIDS at risk of premature death from exposure to other diseases, poor nutrition, stress and lack of medical care. Tragically, at any given time, one-third to one-half of all Americans with HIV/AIDS are either homeless or in imminent danger of becoming homeless.